

“GOD HATH SPOKEN!—REJOICE!”
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*“God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice,
I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.”*
Psalm 108:7

THERE is an old promise, concerning God’s people, which says, “Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” This text is one of the instances in which the Lord has dealt with His saints upon the lines of that promise. Read the preceding verse. David there prays, “Save with thy right hand, and *answer me*,” and while he is waiting for God to answer him, he remembers that God has already spoken. In effect, he says to himself, “I am waiting for an answer, but God has given it to me.” Very often, the response to a believer’s petition has been practically received before he presents his request, and he only needs that God should open his eyes for him to see that, before he called, God had answered his supplication.

Indeed, brethren and sisters in Christ, in one sense, all your prayers—that is, your prayers that ought to be answered—are already answered, for whatsoever there may be that you may rightly ask of God, you really have it, since, in giving us Christ, He has already given us all things. An important part of the duty of faith is to believe that you have what you ask in prayer, and then you shall have it. This is blessed philosophy, may we all learn it! Oftentimes, when we are crying to God, and waiting for an answer to our petition, if we did but look around us, and if we had more acute powers of observation—if our spiritual faculties were keener and quicker, we should perceive that we already have the very thing for which we are asking.

Some of you have, perhaps, been saying, “Oh, that we were indeed the Lord’s people, who have their prayers answered even before they offer them!” Well, then, turn to the Book, and you will find that the Lord has there told you that you are His if, indeed, you are believing in His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God has given you, by that most sure word of testimony, the clearest possible evidence of your personal interest in Christ already. If you are asking for some further kind assuring word, to soothe your fears to rest, turn to the Bible, for there is in it the very word you need. So, seek it out, for I may truly say of God’s revelation in this blessed Book—

*“What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled”*

This leads me to the practical remark that, possibly, the very thing that you have been praying for so long, you may already have obtained, and God may not intend you to pray any longer about it, but may say to you, as He did to Moses, “‘Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.’ Believe that you have the blessing for which you are asking and go forward in that belief. The time for praying about it has passed, this is the time for grasping the blessing by faith, and using it to my praise and glory.”

So it seems to me, in our text, that David had prayed, and then suddenly recollected that he had already received the very thing for which he had asked. So he shakes himself from the dust, and cries,

confidently and jubilantly, “God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.”

I. Three things are clear in the text, and the first is, that GOD’S WORD IS THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH, “God hath spoken in his holiness.” That is the solid basis on which faith builds.

To me, this is a very precious truth, even for the very childhood of Christian life, “*God hath spoken.*” He has not merely put before us His works, which are like hieroglyphs, difficult to read at times, but He has actually broken what else had been the eternal silence and spoken to us in words that even a child can comprehend. Unbelieving men still say, as they did of old, “‘Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.’ If there is a God at all, there is a great gulf fixed between Him and men, how can we know anything about him?”

Ah, sirs! that great gulf will always be between you and your God if you do not believe in the revelation that He has given you in His inspired Word. Until that terrible day comes, when He shall speak in thunder-tones of wrath and summon His guilty creatures to appear at His judgment bar, you will not hear His voice, except as it speaks to you in His Word.

But “God hath spoken in his holiness,” and we ought to be thankful that we have not to serve a God who is dumb. He spake, in the garden of Eden, when our first parents sinned against Him. To the serpent He said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” It was a message of hope to the world when God spake that great promise concerning His Son. Since then, “at sundry times and in divers manners,” God has spoken unto men by His servants, and “by his Son,” of which we have the record in this blessed Book, and since it is a message of mercy and love to us, we ought at once to rejoice that “God hath spoken.”

Sinner, you are pleading with God for mercy, and He might well refuse to answer you even a word, but “God *hath* spoken” already, and the answer to your petition is already recorded in His Word. If, when Adam sinned, He had turned away from our rebellious race and said, “Henceforward, I will hold no communication with you until that day when, with fire and sword, I punish you for your many transgressions,” we should have had no cause for complaining against Him, certainly, we could not have impeached His justice, or found fault with His severity.

But “God *hath* spoken,” He hath broken the silence which would have been death to us, and blessed be His name, He has divinely spoken to us by Him who is THE WORD OF GOD—by God’s great *logos*—the only voice by which He could fully speak out His whole soul so that men might be able to comprehend Him, and it is upon what God has spoken unto us, by His Son, that we have to place our faith, so that, had He not spoken, we should not have had any foundation for our faith, but this is our joy, that “God hath spoken.”

Many of us are, I trust, at least somewhat acquainted with what God hath spoken, though I wish that we were all more perfectly acquainted with His Word, and that our confidence more fully rested upon what the Lord has therein revealed to us.

Why is it that you are able to confide in God’s Word? Surely, it is because you know that, *for God to speak, is for Him to do as He hath said.* By His Word, He made the heavens and the earth, and it is by His Word that the heavens and the earth continue as they are to this day. When He shall “once more” speak, as Paul says in his Epistle to the Hebrews, then shall He unmake what He made, and cast away the worn-out vesture, for, as the Old Hundredth Psalm reminds us—

“He can create and He destroy.”

God’s speaking is very different from man’s. Very often, man talks about something that he says he will do, but when he has talked about it, there is an end of the matter so far as he is concerned. Man has spoken, oh, yes! but you can never be sure that, with the talking tongue will go the working hand. He who is quick to promise is not always so prompt to perform. We have many proverbs which remind us

that men set light by one another's promises, and well they may, but we must never set light by the promises of God. “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

So, beloved brother, if there is a promise of God to help you in a time of trouble, or to preserve you in the hour of temptation, or to deliver you out of trial, or to give you grace according to your day, that promise is as good as if it had been already performed, since God's Word shall certainly be followed by the fulfillment of it in due season. I beseech you, then, as you read the promise, to say to yourself, “It is done as God hath said.”

If any man of means, with whom you do business, gives you His cheque for the amount he owes you, do you not say that he has paid you? Yet he has not handed to you even a penny in cash, no notes or gold and silver coins have passed between you, but you rightly say that he has paid you because his signature on the cheque is as good as money, and is not God's Word as good as man's? Ay, that it is, and far better! Then, so regard it, oh, for faith to do so at this very moment!

Further, *what God hath spoken shall never be reversed*. “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent.” What He has spoken in public, He does not reverse in private. His own declaration is, “I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.” Whatever there may be in the sealed scroll that records God's purposes in predestination, there cannot be anything there to contradict what is written on the open scroll of divine revelation.

As to the doctrine of election, which often terrifies seeking souls, it never should do so, since there can be nothing, in the secret counsels of God, contrary to the plain promises of God recorded in His Word. He has not said “Yea” in one place and “Nay” in another, and if He saith “Yea” today, He will not say “Nay” tomorrow. He Himself said, long ago, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Once let any message go forth out of His mouth, and it shall stand fast forever.

Oh, then, what a firm foundation for faith this is! First, “God hath spoken,” and that is as good as if He had already done as He has said, and secondly, “God hath spoken,” and that which He has said can never be reversed. If there is a promise in the Bible made to a penitent sinner, and you are a penitent sinner, that promise must be kept to you. If there is a blessing promised to a believing soul, and you are a believing soul, that blessing is sure to you. If God has promised to sustain you when you do cast your burden upon Him, and to bring you through the furnace, with your hair unsinged, He will do it, for He never yet has been false to His promise, and He never will be. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of His Word shall ever fail. It stands, as an immutable decree, that JEHOVAH'S will shall be done, and this is JEHOVAH'S will—that, of all that He has promised to the sons and daughters of men, not one syllable shall ever fail. Oh, how blessedly faith ought to rest on such a foundation as this!

Our text says, “God hath spoken in *his holiness*.” Now, it sometimes happens that our greatest difficulty in believing a promise of God lies in His holiness. There is, for instance, a promise of pardon to the soul that believeth in Jesus. We think of stern justice, with her majestic yet severe look. In our heart of hearts, we reverence her, and we ask, “How can God be just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly?” We have, at times, had some idea of the perfect purity of God—the purity of Him in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who charges His angels with folly.

We have trembled sometimes, as though we were dissolved into nothingness, when we have thought of His spotless purity, and we have said, “Can this holy God really mean to receive such sinners as we are, whose very clothes, as Job says, do abhor us? Can He purpose to bring us to His own right hand in glory that we may be among the courtiers in His heavenly kingdom?” Yes, He does mean to do even that, yet the thought of His purity makes us wonder how it can be done. Now, the joy of David was that, when God spoke concerning that glorious—

“Stem of Jesse's rod,”—

he spoke it “in his holiness,” that is, in His whole-ness, with His whole perfectly pure nature. He knew all that David then was, and all that David would be, yet He saw it to be consistent with His infinite perfections to make, even with such a man, “an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure,” and beloved brethren, when the Lord entered into covenant with Christ concerning those whom He gave to Him to be His portion forever, and when, in that covenant, He wrote down blessings exceedingly great and precious, and made promises so vast that we cannot at present form any estimate of their full value, He knew quite well what He was doing, and He did it, knowing all about your doubts and fears concerning your sinfulness and His own holiness.

And now, without in the least marring His perfect purity, and inflexible justice, “God hath spoken in his holiness” to poor lost sinners, and said that He will save all of them who trust in Jesus Christ, His Son, and He has also “spoken in his holiness” to His poor imperfect children, and said that He will bless them, and that He will not turn away from them to do them good.

This is the covenant that He has made with His people, “A new heart also will I give you, and anew spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them...And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” All this, which “God hath spoken in his holiness,” He will do without obscuring that wondrous attribute, or marring the glory of His adorable perfections.

II. Now, in the second place, let us notice THE JOY OF FAITH, “God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice.”

Are any of you heavy of heart just now? If so, I hope you will catch the spirit of David when he uttered these words. You ought to be glad that “God hath spoken in his holiness,” and you must be glad if you feel and know that He has spoken to you. “God hath spoken: I will rejoice.”

Observe that this joy, which faith has, is *a joy in the very fact that God hath spoken*. Though nothing may yet have been done for us, God hath spoken, and therefore our heart rejoices. Every divine promise, if it be rightly viewed by faith, will make the heart leap for joy. Suppose you do not need that particular promise just now, rejoice all the same, for you will need it by and by. If the promise is not made specially to you, yet it is made to somebody, therefore, rejoice that “God hath spoken” so as to meet the needs of somebody else’s case.

What if the blessing be too high for you to reach at present? Nevertheless, rejoice that there are mercies stored up for future and more advanced stages of your spiritual growth. And suppose the mercy is one that you long ago enjoyed, still be glad that you did enjoy it in years past, and so rejoice that “God hath spoken.” Oh, what hymns of praise there are in this blessed Book, if this be the theme of our song, “God hath spoken”! Then, the very first pages of Genesis ought to make us rejoice, and we will rejoice because we know how He made the worlds. Pass along through every page and feast your eyes upon every line of every page, and say all the while, “‘God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice.’ This shall be the subject of my joy all the day long, and in the night watches, will I rejoice in His Word.”

You perceive, as I have said, that *this joy comes to the believer even before the promise is literally fulfilled to him*. It is the joy of faith. You have not yet had the promise fulfilled to your sight, but seeing that it is fulfilled to your faith, begin to be glad about it. Praise the Lord for all the good things He has laid up in store for you, take upon your lips the words of that sweet singer who wrote—

*“And a ‘new song’ is in my mouth,
To long-loved music set;—
‘Glory to Thee for all the grace
I have not tasted yet.’”*

When you are ill, bless God for the health you will enjoy when you get well. When you are downhearted, bless God for the joy that you will have when He shall again lift up the light of His countenance

upon you. When you go to the grave of a Christian friend, bless God because you will meet that friend again. Though you cannot yet see the joys that await you inside the gates of pearl, begin to bless the Lord for all that He has prepared for them that love Him. Borrow from the eternal future, you may, for there is plenty of it. There is an infinity of joy, therefore, antedate it a little while. Send your messengers across the Jordan to bring you some of the Eshcol clusters. You may do so, for they are yours, and you may have some of them, even now, as foretastes of the bliss that is yet to be revealed.

“God hath spoken” to His servants of the great things that He will do for them for many years to come, and throughout eternity. He hath said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” He hath said, “Where I am, there shall also my servant be.” Therefore, as “God hath spoken,” though as yet my soul abideth in the land of darkness, and drought, and barrenness, yet because He will fulfill His promise, my heart shall rejoice. David says, in the 11th verse of this Psalm, “O God, who hast cast us off,” yet here, though he is one of the cast-offs, he says, “God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice.”

Perhaps I am addressing a minister, whose public labors are apparently unsuccessful. My brother, you have been exceedingly grieved because your people have been like the children of Ephraim, who, “being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.” Well now, you must not give way to discouragement, or fall into a dull and sad state of mind, but you must say, “‘God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice.’” Though I have not, as yet, seen any success attending my efforts, He has said, “‘They that sow in tears shall reap in joy,’” and I believe I shall do so, for I have often sowed in tears, and sowed the good seed of the kingdom with many tears and many prayers. Therefore, though I seem, at present, like one of the cast-offs, and little good has come of all that I have done, yet “‘God hath spoken in his holiness,’” and therein “‘I will rejoice.’”

I may be speaking to a brother who is tried in another way. You, dear friend, have not enjoyed the means of grace as you used to do. You blame yourself for the change, and it is right and proper that you should do so. You have not now those happy experiences that you once had, neither do you enjoy such blessed visits from your Lord as you had a year or so ago. You know that the fault lies with you, still, remember that faith is never dependent upon feeling, and our confidence is never to rest upon our inward condition. Otherwise, it rests on the shifting sand, but if this is the case with you, now is the time for you to exercise faith, and to say, “Though I am, as it were a cast-off, and the Word of the Lord is not just now solacing my heart, yet ‘God hath spoken,’” and sinner as I am, if I be not a saint, I trust to what God has said to believing sinners, and “‘I will rejoice,’” even though I seem to be only a cast-off.”

Once more, notice that David, at the time he wrote this Psalm, had discovered *the vanity of human confidence*. He says, in the twelfth verse, “Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.” “My best friend has proved to be a traitor, he that ate bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me. Those, who said that they would never leave me, and who never did leave me while there was anything to be got out of me, are all gone. I said in my haste, ‘All men are liars,’ but ‘God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice.’”

It is grand faith that can rejoice in God when friends go as the swallows fly away in the autumn or drop off as the leaves fade when the summer comes to an end. That was the kind of faith that Habakkuk had when he sang, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

This is a good crutch for Mr. Ready-to-halt, nay, better than that, surely this will take Ready-to-halt’s crutches away and enable him to run without weariness in the ways of the Lord. Why, brethren. Here are the wings of eagles for you, if you only know how to use them, “God hath spoken.” What a mighty power your soul will have in prayer if you go to God and say, “Do as thou hast said.” What a sword this is to flash in the face of the foe, “God hath spoken.” “*It is written*” is that which makes old Rome to tremble, and her seven hills to quake for fear. Get you a rejoicing grip of this great truth, and the dwarf shall become a giant, the feeblest among us shall be as David, and the house of David shall be like the angel of the Lord.

III. The latter part of the text shows us THE ACTIVITY OF FAITH, “God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.”

That is, David says “As God has given me these places to be parts of my kingdom, I will go, and take possession of them.” Some people’s so-called faith is of this order—“God has promised a great blessing, let us go—and sleep.” Their philosophy is—“God’s promise will be sure to be fulfilled, therefore, let us eat and drink, and not trouble at all about the matter. The Lord will have His own people, and He will carry out His own purposes and decrees. They stand fast forever, so the best thing for us is to do nothing at all. God says that there shall be a harvest, so there is no need for our sowing, and we can lie abed as late as we like.”

That is the kind of fatalism that many carry even into their Christianity, they make the eternal purposes and blessed promises of God to become reasons for inaction, but it is not so with any sane child of God. He girds up his loins and says, “God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.”

Whenever you look into the Word of God and read what “God hath spoken” to you, *see that you appropriate it*. Suppose that He has promised you comfort, do not rest satisfied without that comfort. Suppose He has promised you joy and peace in believing, never rest till you have that joy and peace. Suppose He has promised you complete sanctification, full deliverance from the power of evil, do not be satisfied till you are delivered from it all. Never say, “Ah, that is a constitutional sin, that is the result of my temperament.” No, brother, if the Lord hath promised you the victory over your enemies, be not satisfied till you have planted your foot on their necks, and they are in subjection to you.

Some Christian people are living, spiritually, on a penny a week, when their income might be ten thousand a day. You might live like kings, yet you are starving like paupers. Your faith might lay hold on God’s exceeding great and precious promises, and so fill her mouth with good things, but instead of doing so, you are quivering with the palsy of unbelief, and so not grasping what God has put within your reach. There lies Succoth, but you do not mete it out. There lies Shechem, but you do not divide it. Yet they are both of them yours by divine donation. Oh, if our faith did but really grip the promises, and believe in the promise-keeping God, she would never rest till she possessed all the blessings that are really hers!

I think that every young Christian should say, when he joins the church, “Now, I do not want to be merely an average Christian. I am nothing, and less than nothing, in myself, but if there is any blessing to be had from God I will have it. If I can have a closer walk with God than others have, I will have it. If there is more of Christ’s likeness to be had than others possess, I will have it. By God’s grace, ‘I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.’ If God has given me permission to take anything, why should I not have it?”

If you have leave given you to go to Windsor Castle, or Buckingham Palace, as often as you like, and to take whatever you please that is there, and to be treated as a prince, I warrant that you would not need anyone to remind you that you had not been to either place for weeks. If you had such privileges accorded to you, you would be sure to avail yourselves of them, yet here are the gates of the palace of prayer always open to you, and the doors of communion never shut against you, and Jesus, the great King of kings, not only inviting you to come unto Him, but even urging you to abide in Him, and never to depart from him—yet alas! you do not have fellowship with Christ by the month together. Be no longer like the starveling professors that, now and then, taste a little of the heavenly manna, but generally, live on the leeks, and the garlic, and the onions of Egypt.

So, if we have faith in God, we ought to take possession of all that is ours, and further, *we ought to know what we really do possess*. It is delightful to see David here mentioning his various possessions, “I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver, Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph. Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?”

Perhaps you say, “That is very uninteresting, I do not understand it.” No, but David did. He had seen Shechem, and he knew that it was a place worth possessing, and Gilead, and Manasseh, and all the other places interested him, if they do not interest you. And when a child of God looks over his spiritual treasures, and mentions them one by one, he takes an interest even in the very mention of them. The Bible is a dull book to a person who has no part or lot in it.

There is no drier reading, in all the world, than the reading of a will in which one has no interest, but there is nothing that would interest you more than listening to the will of your old uncle, in which he had left you a large fortune. You would lean forward, and you would put your hand to your ear lest you should lose any of it, and you would think that you had never heard a more eloquent discourse than that, and when a man gets to know what “God hath spoken,” what He hath written for him in this blessed Book, which contains His will, every word is music to him, and he is ready to pick out some of the choicest words and say, “Regeneration is mine, justification is mine, adoption is mine, sanctification is mine, union to Christ is mine, resurrection is mine, eternal life is mine, yea, all things are mine,” and he would dwell upon each one with a holy unction, at least to his own soul.

Then, if you know what God has given you, *mind that you use it all*. What does David say? “Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe.” As an Oriental, who is weary, throws his sandals to one servant, and then puts His foot out, that another servant may lave it with flowing water, so David says, “I will use Moab and Edom as my servitors.”

Now, Christian man, if you have true faith, and mean to do real business with God, and for Him, say to yourself, “I have this, and that, and the other blessing, and I am going to use them all for His glory. I have been adopted by God, I am His child, so I will plead with Him, and will get all I can from my Father to use in His service! I am justified, I have peace with God, so I will go forth, and in the power of that peace, I will let others see what bliss Christians know. Then I also have sanctification given me in Christ, so I will use that, and seek to be a true saint, that my life may be a blameless, holy, gracious, Christ-like life. By God’s grace, I will not have even one unused privilege.

Once more. David, being in the spirit of full faith in God, now *manifests the spirit of enterprise*, for he says, “God has given me Edom; then I will have it. There is that strong city of Petra, the rock city. It is like an eagle’s nest upon a crag, who is the bold man that can capture it, and take the spoil? The fierce sons of Edom, in the defile, will be sure to slay the first men who dare to march into that rocky chasm.” “Who will bring me into the strong city?” says he, “who will lead me into Edom?” The spirit of enterprise and of conquest is in his soul, and then He adds, “Wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?” “Since thou hast spoken as thou hast done, thou wilt surely lead us to victory.” In like manner, every man, who has faith in God’s Word, ought to be a man of enterprise.

I wonder, brothers and sisters, how many of you have any enterprise for God in view just now—storming some rocky sin, some Petra-like evil in your soul, that seems almost impregnable. You know that your Savior’s name is “Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” Then, in the strength of that name, go up, and smite your bosom sin, and your constitutional sin, and never rest till you have driven your dagger through every evil that lurks within your soul.

Then think what room for enterprise you have among your fellowmen. “The earth is the LORD’S, and the fullness thereof,” yet vast multitudes of mankind still sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. Have any of you enterprise enough to go up against the strong cities that are still in rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ? Can any of you go, and look after those who walk the streets, and seek to bring them to Christ? That would be conquering Edom itself. Have any of you enterprise enough to go down into the slums and dens of London, to seek out the poorest and the vilest of the people? Have you confidence enough to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ can give you that Petra-like city, that dark spot where thieves congregate, where blasphemy is the current language, and where profanity seems even to pollute the very air? Have you “pluck” enough to undertake such an enterprise as that?

Is there manliness enough in any one of you to attempt it? Then, having asked the question, “Who will lead me into Edom?” do not forget to pray, “Wilt not thou, O God? Thou hast spoken; wilt thou not

also act, through thy people, so that all flesh may see the salvation of God?” Let each child of God say, “O my Father, I believe that, weak and feeble as I am, my weakness and feebleness need be no hindrance to me if I go to thy service in thy strength! ‘Thou hast spoken in thy holiness; I will rejoice;’ and in thy name, I will conquer the foe, and gather the spoil for thee.” “Through God,” says David, in the thirteenth verse, “we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.”

Therefore, if ye believe in God, haste to the spoil of his enemies, quit you like men, be strong! If you really are linked with omnipotence, prove it. Do not talk about it, but let your deeds show that the Lord of hosts is with you, and that the God of Jacob is your refuge. If, indeed, the Lord’s arm be with you, smite as the Lord would smite. If, indeed, He speaks through you, speak as He would speak. Be strong, and very courageous, and press forward, in the name of God, set up your banners, and who knoweth whether even this feeble message of mine, in rousing you to action upon the basis of confidence in the Word of God, may not cast down some stronghold of the enemy, and make the walls of some mighty Jericho to fall flat to the ground? The Lord grant it for His name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALMS 57:7-11 AND 108

Let me say, before we begin our reading, that the 108th Psalm is made up partly of the 60th and partly of the 57th, yet we are sure that the Holy Spirit is not short of language, so that he needs to repeat himself. It is always a pity to think that any portion of Scripture can be tautology. It cannot be, there is some good reason for every repetition, and you will see that, in the two Psalms, which we are about to read, the latter part of the 57th coincides with the first part of the 108th, and that, in the 57th Psalm, we have prayer and praise, and in the 108th, we have praise and prayer. It is well that we should see how these two holy exercises can change places—so that, sometimes, we begin with prayer, and pray ourselves up into praise, and at other times, we begin with praise, and find in it the strength we need to aid us in prayer.

Psalm Chapter 57. Verse 7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.*

Let the lions open their cruel mouths, and roar, and let wicked men, “whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword, do their worst against me, let my every footstep be among the nets and pits that they have set and dug to catch me, even in the midst of danger, ‘my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.’”

8. *Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*

“I will awake the dawn,”—so the Hebrew has it—“I will wake up the morning, and chide it for being so long in opening its eyes to look upon God’s works. David did this, notwithstanding all the trials of his surrounding circumstances. He calls on his “glory”—perhaps he means his tongue—possibly, his poetic faculty—perchance, his musical skill—it may be that he means his intellect—whatever his “glory” is, he calls upon his highest powers to awake to praise his God. Then he takes his psaltery and harp—strange companions for a man whose soul is among lions, but saints know how to evoke sweetest music even when their enemies are fighting fiercely against them—and he sings—

9-11. *I will praise thee, O lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.*

Have not some of you found God’s mercy to be “great unto the heavens”? It even seemed to reach above the heavens, and as for God’s truth, you followed it till you could follow it no further, for it had ascended above the clouds. We could scarcely, I think, ever expect to understand here all the truth which God has pleased to let us hear or read. It reaches “unto the clouds,” and there we must leave it for the present. When God ceases to reveal anything, we may cease to inquire concerning it.

I saw, in Florence, a picture of “The Sleeping Savior.” He is represented as sleeping in the manger at Bethlehem, and the artist depicts the angels hovering round Him, with their fingers on their lips as though they would not wake Him from His holy slumbers. So, when God bids truth sleep, do not try to wake it. There is enough revealed for thee to know, and more that thou wilt know by and by, so, pry not between the folded leaves, but wait your Lord’s appointed time to teach you more of His will.

Psalm Chapter 108. Verses 1-5. *O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;*

Here, we begin with praise—the very praise with which we finished the other Psalm—praise in a very joyous, confident spirit, for the praise which precedes prayer has more of the “Jubilate” note in it than ordinary praise has. The prayer in Psalm 57:1, which preceded the praise, was earnest, and fervent, and confident, yet it did not reach so high a note as this—

6-9. *That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me. God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my law-giver; Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.*

David is claiming the kingdom which God promised to him by the mouth of Samuel the prophet—looking first upon the kingdom itself, and then upon the surrounding territories, and laying hold upon them all as his own because God had given them to him.

10. *Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?*

In the spirit of a truly courageous leader, he means to fight with that ancient foe of Israel, and wisely appeals to God to lead his army—

11-13. *Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts? Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*

The discourse, preceding the above exposition, is #2864 in the regular weekly issues of C. H. Spurgeon’s sermons, which commenced in January, 1855, and have continued, uninterruptedly, ever since. It is also the first sermon in the 50th annual volume, and may be obtained, printed in gold, price 3d., as a memento of this unique event in the history of homiletic literature. Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster, Paternoster Buildings, London, will gladly send a complete Textual Index to any applicant.

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